

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6

THE WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
12 April 1979

U.S. Says No To Spy Posts Inside China

By a Washington Star Staff Writer

A suggestion that the United States attempt to establish bases in western China to monitor Soviet missile tests has been squashed by the administration.

Effective monitoring of missile tests is essential to assure compliance with any new SALT agreement, and good monitoring bases are in extremely short supply for the United States.

The United States lost what were presumed to be its best monitoring bases when the shah of Iran was deposed and several sites there were closed by the revolutionary government.

Another monitoring site in Pakistan was lost a decade ago, and the ones in Turkey that were closed from 1975 until last October have an uncertain future.

However, a look at the map shows that ideal monitoring sites would be in the mountains of western China's Xinjiang (Sinkiang) province, within electronic watching distance of the main missile-testing grounds at Tyuratam in Soviet Central Asia.

SINCE SINO-AMERICAN relations began to improve in 1971, the map has gotten occasional looks from U.S. officials responsible for collecting intelligence data on new Soviet missiles. A recent combination of events made them look more closely.

It was the fall of the shah, forcing the closing of the closest and therefore in some ways best U.S. sites for watching Tyuratam, and the establishment of diplomatic relations with China followed by the visit here of Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping).

The idea began to circulate at low levels in the intelligence community and the administration generally that it might be nice to work out a cooperative deal with the Chinese for monitoring missile tests by the presumed common enemy.

But when this began to filter up to senior levels, it was firmly squashed. White House officials say the idea is dead.

IF CHINA WERE to agree to it — a big if — then such cooperation would conflict with the administration's efforts to avoid antagonizing the Soviet Union by tilting too far toward China.

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(Verification)